

REMARKS

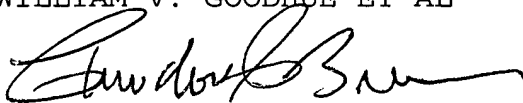
At the time of filing the appeal, all the pending claims 1-14, 16-31 and 68-93 were rejected. In the Examiner's Answer mailed March 18, 2004, the Examiner has now indicated that claims 2-14 and 16-31 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form so as not to be dependent on a rejected base claim, and that claims 69-93 are allowed.

The present amendment cancels rejected claim 1 and rewrites claims 2-14, 16-31 and 68 so as not to be dependent on a rejected base claim. Thus, only claims indicated to be allowable and allowed remain in the case. Applicants submit that the amendment can be properly considered and entered at this time since the claims were indicated to be allowable or allowed for the first time in the Examiner's Answer and no rejected claims remain in the case thus rendering the issues on appeal moot.

Accordingly, consideration and formal allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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